

BAKE THESE SPROUTED BISCUITS

The new secret to the best whole-grain biscuits around—sprouted flour. Who knew?

BY PETER REINHART

Whole grains have a leg up on refined ones when it comes to health. But start baking with them and you may be disappointed. Essentially, white flour is sugar in the guise of starch—no wonder it tastes so good! The healthy part of whole grains—the bran and germ—can taste bitter and weigh down bread and baked goods like biscuits. However, when grains are sprouted the bitterness goes away and the natural sweetness comes forth without sacrificing the nutritional perks. In other words, sprouted flour tastes more like white flour but still has all the good-for-you benefits! Tear into one of these flaky sprouted-wheat biscuits, and you'll be a believer too.

PETER REINHART is a master baking instructor. This recipe is adapted with permission from his *Bread Revolution* (Ten Speed Press, © 2014).

“Sprouted” Defined

Add a little warmth and moisture and whole grains begin to sprout (or germinate, for all you science nerds). Once sprouted, the wet grains are either ground into a dough or dried and milled into flour. The dough is made into sprouted-grain breads found in the bakery section or the freezer case of your grocery store. (Their high moisture content can increase their risk of spoiling.) Sprouted chips and crackers are usually made from sprouted-grain flour—as are these biscuits.

Easier on Your Gut?

In the sprouting process, some of the grains' carbohydrates are broken down into a more easily digestible form, which means they have slightly less carbohydrate than unsprouted grains and may be easier on your gut. But are they better tolerated if you have a gluten sensitivity? Research shows sprouted grains do have less

gluten; however, "people experience gluten sensitivity differently, so it's impossible to say that sprouted grains are more easily tolerated," says Stefano Guandalini, M.D., founder and medical director of the University of Chicago's Celiac Disease Center. But not all sprouted grains contain gluten. Gluten-free grains like rice and amaranth can be sprouted too.

Power to the Sprouts

Advocates say sprouted grains deliver more vitamins, minerals, fiber and protein than their unsprouted counterparts. And there's some supporting research: one study from the *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture* found more fiber and amino acids (the building blocks of protein) in sprouted wheat after a 48-hour germination period. Another study showed up to a fourfold increase in folate in sprouted rye. Still, the science is somewhat limited and we don't know if those extra nutrients stick around after sprouted grains are processed into flour.

—Sara Haas, RDN, LDN

SPROUTED-WHEAT BISCUITS

ACTIVE: 30 MIN TOTAL: 1 HR 20 MIN

TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare through Step 5, cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days. **EQUIPMENT:** 2-inch round cutter, offset spatula

- 2 cups plus 2 tablespoons sprouted whole-wheat flour, plus ¼-½ cup for dusting
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon plus ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 10 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 1¼ cups buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon canola oil

1. Pulse flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a food processor until combined. Add butter and pulse until evenly combined and in pea-size bits. Add buttermilk and pulse

in very short bursts until evenly incorporated. The dough will be soft and a little shaggy looking.

2. Generously dust a work surface with flour. Use a rubber spatula to transfer the dough to the work surface. Sprinkle with more flour. With floured hands, gently pat the dough into a rectangle about ¾ inch thick, with a long edge facing you. Gently roll out the dough to ½ inch thick, using short strokes from the center outward and very little pressure, dusting the dough and surface with more flour as needed. Run an offset spatula under the dough, then gently fold it in thirds, like a letter.
3. Dust the work surface with more flour and rotate the dough 90 degrees. Dust the dough and roll out again into a ½-inch-thick rectangle, then fold it in thirds again. Repeat the process two more times (for four folds total), dusting the work surface and the dough with flour each time before rolling out.
4. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Place the

folded dough on it and refrigerate for 15 minutes.

5. Brush a clean work surface with oil, place the dough on it and gently roll out to ½ inch thick. Cut out biscuits with a floured 2-inch round cutter. Press the scraps back together and reroll, to make about 24 biscuits total. Place the biscuits ½ inch apart on the prepared baking sheet. Refrigerate for 15 minutes. (Or cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.)
6. Position a rack in the upper third of oven; preheat to 500°F.
7. Place the pan of biscuits on the upper rack. Immediately reduce the oven temperature to 450°. Bake until rich golden brown, 12 to 14 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool for 5 minutes. Serve warm.

MAKES: 2 DOZEN (1 BISCUIT EACH)

Calories 92, **Fat** 5g (sat. 3g), **Cholesterol** 13mg, **Carbs** 10g, **Total sugars** 1g (added 1g), **Protein** 2g, **Fiber** 1g, **Sodium** 129mg, **Potassium** 65mg.

Look for sprouted-wheat flour at natural-foods stores or online at organicsproutedflour.net or kingarthurfLOUR.com. Flours from white wheat berries give lighter results while those from red wheat give the typical "wheaty" look.

Germination Nation

Sprouted rice, sprouted lentils, sprouted flour, sprouted tortilla chips: Sprouted foods are everywhere. Here's why you should try them.

BY KRISTIN DONNELLY

FRIENDS DABBLING with the raw-food diet have told me about the health benefits of eating sprouted nuts, beans and grains, saying that the process of soaking these seeds (they're all technically seeds) "awakens their life force" as they begin to germinate. The concept always seemed a little New Agey to me, but after noticing sprouted foods for sale at places like Whole Foods—everything from sprouted brown rice to sprouted tortilla chips—I decided to learn more.

I reached out to Esha Ray, who sells a line of sprouted grains and lentils called TruRoots at health-food stores, and even in three-pound bags at Costco. "I grew up in India, where cooks often sprout legumes before cooking to make them easier to digest," she says. During the sprouting process, to nourish the tiny shoot as it grows, the complex carbohydrates in seeds break down into simple sugars, and the proteins

break down into amino acids; both are easier for the body to process. Sprouted foods also cook more quickly: TruRoots's sprouted, dehydrated lentils, for instance, need just five minutes in a pot of boiling water.

"Sprouting also changes the chemistry of seeds, so they become nutritional powerhouses," says chef Adina Niemerow, an expert in holistic cooking. The seeds develop more vitamins (usually lots of A, B and C) and other nutrients, often in concentrated form. Compared to broccoli, for instance, broccoli sprouts can have up to 50 times more of the cancer-preventing phytochemical sulforaphane. Raw sprouts also have lots of enzymes—those mysterious "life forces." Niemerow believes these enzymes can make you feel younger and more energized.

She is such a proponent of eating raw sprouts, in fact, that she added a section to the second edition of her book *Super Cleanse*, which comes out this month, explaining how to sprout seeds at home. (For step-by-step instructions, see the column at right.) She recommends buying organic seeds specifically intended for sprouting, sold at some health food stores and on websites like sproutpeople.org.

I've found another reason to start a home sprout experiment: "They're such a sustainable food source," Niemerow says. It's an argument that speaks to the locavore in me: Even in the dead of winter, I can have my own sprout garden in a jar under the kitchen sink.

Editor's note: Raw sprouts present a very small risk of food poisoning, so doctors often advise those with compromised immune systems to avoid them.

Sprouting beans (like the mung beans here) is easy and makes them super-nutritious.

STEP-BY-STEP

Sprouting Beans



1. SOAKING In a wide-mouth 1-quart jar, cover ½ cup dried mung beans or green lentils with water. Cover the jar with a double layer of cheesecloth and secure with a rubber band. Let stand.



2. DRAINING After 24 hours, drain and rinse the beans through the cloth, then drain again.

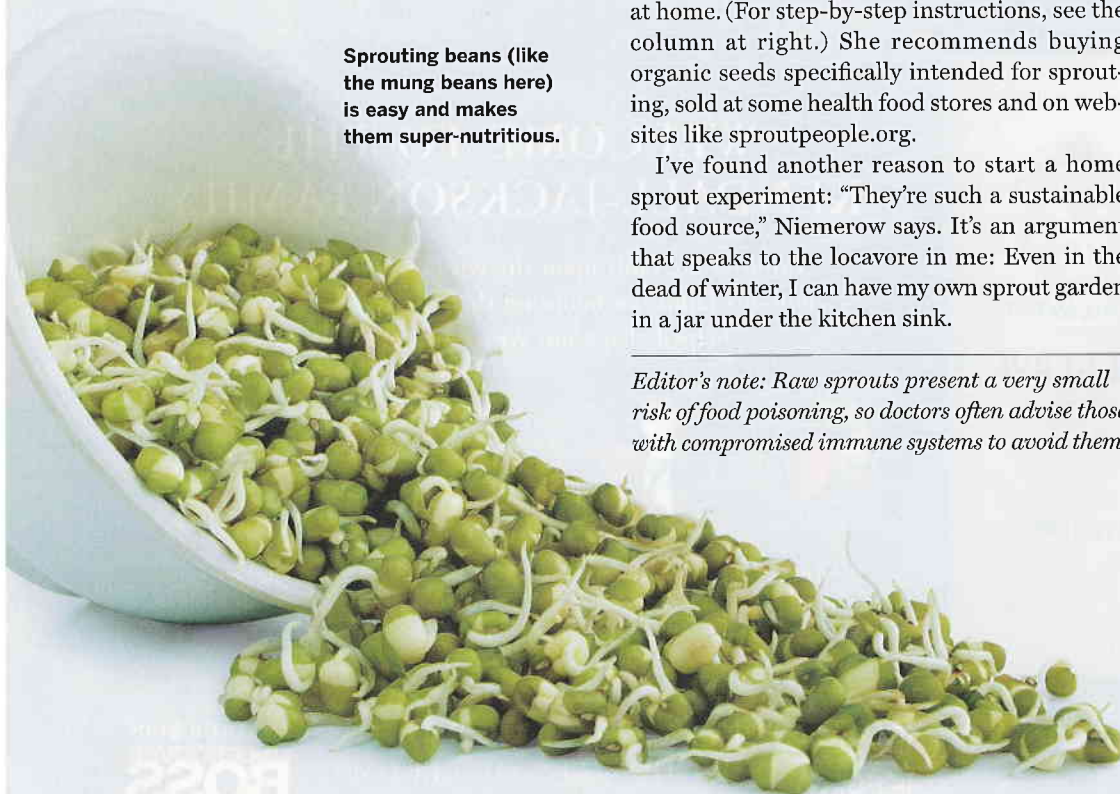


3. SPROUTING Store the jar in a dark place on its side, propping up the base so excess water drains onto paper towels. Rinse and drain the beans or lentils twice a day.



4. HARVESTING After 36 hours, the beans or lentils will grow tails and be ready to eat, but they taste best when the tails are about 1½ times as long as the beans or lentils. Rinse well, cover the jar loosely and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

ILLUSTRATIONS: CHRIS PHILPOT. PHOTOGRAPH: ISTOCK



Sprouts have enough protein to turn this salad into a main course.

Striped fabric by Hable Construction.

RECIPE

Super Sprout Chopped Salad

TOTAL: 35 MIN • 4 SERVINGS

"I honestly feel energized after eating a bowl of sprouts," says holistic chef Adina Niemerow, who often makes this crisp salad for clients. While she blends lemon juice with *ume* plum vinegar and raspberry vinegar, the salad would be equally delicious dressed with balsamic vinegar in place of both.

- 1 pound sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-by- $\frac{1}{3}$ -inch sticks
- 5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon *ume* vinegar (Japanese plum vinegar)
- 1 tablespoon raspberry vinegar
- 1 tablespoon tamari
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 2 cups lentil, mung or adzuki sprouts
- 1 romaine heart, coarsely chopped
- 4 small Japanese or Persian cucumbers, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice
- 2 cups packed mesclun
- 2 large scallions, finely chopped
- 8 oil-cured olives, pitted and chopped
- 1 firm, ripe Hass avocado, diced
- 1 tablespoon black sesame seeds

1. Preheat the oven to 450°. On a large rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment paper, toss the sweet potato sticks with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil; spread in an even layer. Season with salt and bake for about 12 minutes, until the sweet potatoes are just tender.
2. In a small bowl, combine the lemon juice, *ume* and raspberry vinegars, tamari and honey with the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of oil. Season the dressing with salt.
3. In another small bowl, toss the sprouts with 1 tablespoon of the dressing and let stand for 10 minutes, tossing a few times.
4. In a large bowl, combine the romaine, cucumbers, mesclun, scallions, olives and avocado and toss. Add the remaining dressing and toss well. Transfer the salad to a platter and top with the roasted sweet potatoes, followed by the marinated sprouts. Sprinkle with the black sesame seeds and serve. ●

SPROUTED FOODS WORTH BUYING

TruRoots Sprouted and dehydrated so they're shelf-stable, TruRoots's grains and beans cook quickly in less than half the usual time. \$5.50 for one 14-oz bag sprouted green lentils (at stores) or \$26 for six 14-oz bags; truroots.com.

To Your Health Sprouted Flour Co. Made from sprouted wheat, quinoa and other whole grains, these flours have more vitamins than regular whole-grain flour, but taste the same. \$6 for a 32-oz bag of sprouted wheat flour; organicsproutedflour.net.

Simply Sprouted Way Better Snacks Sprouted seeds—like flax, daikon radish, chia and broccoli—make these sturdy stone-ground-corn tortilla chips super-crunchy and a good source of omega-3 fatty acids. \$3.50 for a 5.5-oz bag; gowaybetter.com.

Annie Chun's Sprouted Sticky Brown Rice This precooked rice comes in a single serving as part of the Rice Express line or with seaweed in a make-your-own sushi kit called Sushi Wraps. \$3 for 6 oz; anniechun.com.